

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking for your assistance to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Los Angeles County. Please check with the facility before visiting and follow issued guidelines in order to keep everyone healthy. If you are feeling sick, stay at home or go home as soon as possible even if you have mild symptoms. In order to protect elderly residents at congregate facilities, you may be asked to curtail all visits. Please plan now on how to maintain communication with a resident through alternative virtual communications.

What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can change into a new human virus that can spread from person-to-person, which is what happened with the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is likely to spread in the same way as other respiratory illnesses. It is thought to spread from an infected person who has symptoms to others by:

- Droplets produced through coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild (or no) symptoms to people becoming severely ill, and needing hospitalization, or dying. People over the age of 65, those with underlying medical conditions, and pregnant women are at especially high risk. Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe illness

What should I do if I have these symptoms?

Stay at home or go home as soon as possible if you begin to feel unwell, even if you have mild symptoms. Contact your regular health care provider for guidance, as needed.

- Stay home until at least 7 days have passed after your symptoms first appeared AND at least 3 days after you have recovered. Recovery means that your fever is gone for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications AND your respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) have improved

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Will I be allowed to visit my loved one at the facility?

Most facilities have stopped all visitors. Some facilities may have exceptions under special circumstances, such as end of life visits. Even if they do allow visitor you should stay home if you have symptoms of COVID-19. It is best to check with the facility before you go to determine what their policy is. Ask them about any alternative visitation options that you can take advantage of like video calls or other electronic communications that they have made available to their residents. It is important to continue to check in on your loved one in other ways even if you cannot visit in person.

What is the facility doing to protect everyone?

Some of the ways many facilities are trying to protect staff and residents is by limiting visitors, eliminating group activities and non-essential services like barbers or in-person entertainment. Medical services may be transitioned to telehealth visits if possible. Residents may be asked to minimize leaving their rooms except for essential activities like doctor's visits. Talk to the facility manager about ways that they are working to keep everyone safe, and healthy.

What can I do to protect myself and others from COVID-19?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limit close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash can, and immediately wash hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

What if I am stressed about COVID-19?

When you hear, read, or watch news about an outbreak of an infectious disease, it is normal to feel anxious and show signs of stress. It is important to care for your own physical and mental health. For help, call the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771 or call 2-1-1.

Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news, and hoaxes surrounding the novel coronavirus. Accurate information, including announcements of new cases in LA County, will always be distributed by Public Health through press releases, social media, and our website. The website has more information on COVID-19 including a guide to coping with stress:

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
 - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
 - Social media: @lapublichealth
- The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771.
- Call 2-1-1